

The Social and Economic Problems of the Farm Girl

Gertrude L. Warren



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Extension Service.....C.W. WARBURTON *Director*
Office of Cooperative Extension Work.....C.B. SMITH *Chief*
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OF THE FARM GIRL*

Gertrude L. Warren,
Organization, Boys' and Girls' Club Work

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This subject, "The Social and Economic Problems of the Farm Girl," demands much time and thought in order to portray adequately even the outstanding problems as to their scope, variety, and complexity. However, every conscientious study should be of help in more skillfully formulating 4-H club programs that will assist farm girls in solving some of the important problems which they are facing. For convenience, let us consider, first, the farm girl of to-day in relation to the great youth movement that has made itself felt in all the leading nations of the world; second, the farm girl in relation to her parents, adult leaders, and others of the adult world with whom she comes in contact; and third, the farm girl in relation to her part in the open country, if she remains there, and, if not, in relation to the part she may later take in city affairs.

The
present
age

In no period of national development have the problems of the adolescent girl been considered so seriously as during the past two decades culminating at the present time. This has been a period of extensive changes, each having its influence upon the girlhood of America. Science and invention have lessened the drudgery of the work of the field and of the home, speeded both industrial and agricultural output, created additional human wants, increased the number and size of American cities, and vastly shortened distances. Farm youth, often with a groping desire to be to the fore with city youth, has also been caught, to some extent, in the whirl of these swift changes, although too frequently unprepared to use advantageously the leisure thus made possible. The automobile, the airplane, the movie, and the radio with its jazz have multiplied the desires and temptations of the adolescent girl everywhere during her period of least stability. Added to these factors effecting changing conditions, calling for adjustments often difficult to make, are the after effects of the World War, which are causing a heavy strain upon the established social standards of previous years and increasing the mental confusion of the present decade. The home, school, and church, although concentrated upon aiding the situation, have

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been more or less handicapped. The many attractions made possible and often easily accessible by the inventive genius of the present century are tending increasingly to call youth from the home and to develop an independence in thinking and acting rather difficult for adults to understand and constructively reenforce.

The transition of social life from the home is being effected in this century in much the same manner as that of work from the home in the past century. The creative recreation of the home is fast giving way to commercialized recreation, often with too emotional appeal, requiring little creative effort and nearly always outside of the home. The wholesome social life around the family table is also being influenced by the swift pace of outside activities. All these factors are having a profound effect upon the adolescent girl and her own choice of activities on the farm as well as in the city.

The
youth
movement

It was probably due to the realization of a number of these factors and their ultimate influence on youth, both rural and urban, that there were organized in the beginning of the present century various types of volunteer organizations of girls and boys of the "teen" age. Although the development has been of a more constructive nature in the United States, it has been equally outstanding in many other countries and marks the first widespread directed effort in social education from the standpoint of affording the individual, while in the formative period of adolescence, an opportunity to take part voluntarily as a member of a community group in those activities of a civic nature which lead to group action and group control.

"Youth in revolt" is becoming a common term, having its origin in those countries where there has been, since the World War, a revolt against the "old mechanized life in which the dominant note was loyalty and obedience to the ruling house."* In Germany, the so-called spirit of revolt finds expression through the youth movement, which, in turn, divides itself into several distinct groups, among which are the Christian Youth Movement, having a religious purpose; the Nationalist Youth Movement, its purpose being implied in its name; and the International or Social Democratic Youth Movement, embracing all the countries of the world.

There have always been youth movements. The Christian "era" itself was in the beginning a youth movement. Yet because of the present ease with which the human voice can be heard round the world, these youth movements are concentrating attention on youth as never before and causing youth in turn to be relatively more self-conscious. Youth to-day may be roughly divided into

*Lakoff, Mary Gussin. Can the youth of America compete with the youth of Europe? School and Society 31: 727-729. May 31, 1930.

100
100
100
100
100

two classes---the vast majority who are developing as normal adolescents, busy with the day's work along rather conventional lines, and the small but growing minority who are either conspicuously extreme in everything they undertake or conspicuously critical, ready for any radical change which comes along. To best help both groups is the continuous problem of all leaders of youth. For youth will never be without its problems, due largely to its lack of experience and knowledge and its eager grasping for life of which it understands so little.

The girl
in
relation
to the
adult
world

The following clipping* emphasizes one of the problems of the adolescent girl about which many are concerned: "If the weather be very cold, a thin muslin gown or frock is most advisable, because it agrees with the season, being perfectly cool. The neck, arms, and particularly the elbows bare, in order that they be agreeably painted and mottled by Mr. John Frost, of the color of castile soap. Shoes of kid, the thinnest that can possibly be procured, as they tend to promote colds and make a lady look interesting. Picnic silk stockings with clocks, flesh-colored, are most fashionable as they have the appearance of bare legs---nudity being all the rage."

You, no doubt, are under the impression that this clipping was cut from the morning paper, but as a matter of fact it was written by Washington Irving more than 100 years ago. It would seem, then, that the problem of young people is not new.

Any characteristic faults peculiar to the present growing generation can easily be traced to causes embedded in modern life as a whole. In answer to the question, What ails our youth?** George Coe, of Teachers College, Columbia University, states: "Oriental critics like Tagore and Gandhi, if we should interrogate them, would say, 'The seed that your western civilization has sown is sprouting in your youth; they are not especially perverse---they merely show the defects of your whole system of life.'"

Obviously, the parents of the present generation are influenced in their attitude toward youth by the same attitudes that prompted their own parents, still under the influence of the Victorian age, to deal in turn with them. Social conventions then bordered on what is considered prudery to-day. Economic conditions were such that the large majority was concerned in making a living out of the bare necessities. Only the few could travel and be educated away from home. The results in financial gain, due to the introduction of machinery in shop and field at

*Williams, Herbert D. The problem girl and her problems. New York, Big Brother and Big Sister Federation, Inc. Not dated. Mim.

**Coe, George. What ails our youth? 97 p. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926.

that time, are just now being felt by the great middle class. The parents of the youth of to-day, freed from the grind of making a living common to their grandparents, being now in a position to follow at least some of their recreational, educational, and cultural desires, and being themselves free to choose, are caught in the whirl of all the temptations that modern invention has made possible. These parents themselves can not resist, but they, in accordance with their own early semi-Victorian training, can not understand why youth should clamor to do those things, too. Then, to make matters worse, manufacturers the world over are turning out of the factory everything as attractive as possible for youth---sport cars, raccoon coats, et cetera. Is it any wonder that youth is asking for a great deal to-day?

It may be well to point out that the activities and thoughts of the farm and city youth differ in the main only in intensity, due largely to the difference in their respective environments. Whereas farm youth is in a more stable environment with relatively few of the glaring temptations, yet good roads, summer tourists, movies, road houses, et cetera are causing farm youth increasingly to desire many of the same things that delight those living in urban areas, as well as causing them to want to go where such desires can be gratified. Moreover, many of the leaders of farm youth are city bred, living in the midst of the city whirl, and consequently fail to have a clear philosophy of rural life and of their responsibility in helping rural youth to strike a satisfying, sound balance.

Because so few parents understand the natural tendencies of youth to become emancipated gradually from parental control, and, in turn, to become an all-round developed personality, many misunderstandings between parents and their young people occur, especially in this era of easy transportation out of reach of parental supervision. In far too many cases parents need as much instruction in helping youth to become independent in a wholesome way as does youth in relation to parental obedience.

A study* made by Robert and Helen Lynd lists the following sources of important disagreements with parents:

- Use of the automobile.
- Choice of friends.
- Spending money.
- Going out on school nights.
- Grades in school.
- Time getting in at night.
- Home duties.
- Membership in clubs or societies.

*Lynd, Robert S., and Lynd, Helen Merrell. Middletown; a study in contemporary American culture. 550 p. New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1929.

Attendance at church and Sunday school.
Sunday observance.
Manner of dressing.
Attendance at unchaperoned parties.

Other sources of disagreement with girls:

Petting.
Cigarettes.
Boy question.
Playing cards.
Hair cuts.
Reading too many books.
Dancing.
Riding by auto to other towns at night.

Other sources of disagreement with boys:

Smoking.
Drinking.
Owning a rifle.
Working.

In this study, in which 382 girls and 348 boys were questioned, only 2 per cent reported that they did not disagree with their parents. The Lynds add that it would seem that these parents were either very wise or very weak.

During the last two decades, beginning with G. Stanley Hall, much has been written concerning the development of personality during the adolescent period with its many physical, mental, and social changes. Although this literature is familiar to all of you, yet there are a few points that seem particularly important from the standpoint of the farm girl. Whereas there is considerable discussion in urban areas, through lectures and magazine articles, regarding this transitional period, yet in the country, especially in thinly settled communities off the main highways, an unfortunate amount of ignorance and unhappy attitude still exists, often causing the farm girl embarrassment, confusion, and worries that, according to Dr. Leo H. Bartemeier;* may result in adult nervousness and even insanity. Dr. Bartemeier states further that such early physical worries play an important role in disfiguring the personality pattern and are often the beginning of a life of discomfort and maladjustment.

*Bartemeier, Leo H. Adolescent problems of girls. New York, Big Brother and Big Sister Federation, Inc. Not dated. Mim.

Another characteristic of adolescence which needs careful guidance is that craving by every young person for admiration and praise. Every adolescent girl desires the esteem and respect of the social group. Her opinion of what others think of her is responsible either for feelings of satisfaction and serenity or dissatisfaction and a sense of insufficiency. Through school and neighborhood associations the adolescent girl is continually developing an ideal toward which she strives---and this is that particular type of perfection which the social group admires and regards as worth while. The adolescent girl constantly endeavors to attain the standards thus involved. The behavior attempts to reach this ideal picture of what she would like to be, resemble, according to Dr. Bartemeier, "the bait-casting efforts of an amateur angler endeavoring to land a fly in a particular spot in the stream. There is much undershooting, some overshooting, and gradually a fair success in striking the desired goal. When the girl overshoots in behavior, we call her conceited, too cocksure, and, in fact, we calmly refer to her as 'adolescent.' This is characteristic of all youth and is simply an effort to appear adult and to achieve recognition from the social group. It is a daring to achieve fame at any price. Any accomplishments toward perfection bring with them feelings of satisfaction and security when in or with the group." On the other hand, Dr. Bartemeier contends that "if the girl feels she is failing to reach the ideal standards she has set up for herself as a goal, if she undershoots in her attempts, there arises an internal dissatisfaction---an emotional conflict that she has not yet reached what she set out to accomplish. This sense of difference between herself and the ideal may be real or imaginary. An actual physical, social, financial, racial, or intellectual inferiority may really exist, but on the contrary she may be only misinterpreting the opinions of others. In either case, we have the establishment of what we commonly call an inferiority complex---and such troubles usually begin in adolescence. Feelings of inferiority toward herself drive the personality into one of two patterns of behavior. In those cases in which the insufficiency is not too severe, the adolescent becomes shy, timid, less talkative, self-conscious and retiring, and is described as a shut-in type or nonsociable personality. She lacks aggressiveness and is a poor mixer." We find many such personality patterns among farm girls living in homes on poor roads in out-of-the-way places. If the sense of inferiority is very great, the girl unconsciously is apt to withdraw from the environment altogether through a process of abnormal daydreaming into a world of her own fancies, and such a twisting and distorting of her personality takes place that she can no longer live in the community and must go elsewhere. As is commonly known, an extreme reaction to inferiority feelings is known as dementia praecox. In conclusion, Dr. Bartemeier warns that a case of dementia praecox is a serious form of mental disorder which usually requires years to unravel.

According to H. Crechton Miller, the emotional development of girls passes through several periods of adjustment:

- 8 - 9 years.....Mother phase.
- 9 - 15 years.....School phase.
- 15 - 18 years.....Father phase.
- 18 - years.....Mating phase.

In her teens, Miller says, after gaining her first knowledge of sex and the basis of motherhood, the adolescent girl needs her father and the influence of his attitude toward her mother to overcome her first instinctive shrinking from marriage. According to Miller, the father's treatment of his daughter herself matters little in comparison to his treatment of the mother in her presence. Hence the danger to farm girls at this age of perceiving evidences of unkindness or even indifference between their parents, to say nothing of evidences of unfaithfulness or separation and divorce.

Social
problems

Although the divorce rate in the country is much below that in the cities, there are apt to be too few evidences of kindnesses, courtesies, and congenial remarks between members of the average farm family, due especially at nightfall to the tired feeling resulting from the large amount of necessarily hard physical labor involved in the day's work. Such attitudes, in turn, make an imprint and influence, probably far more than is realized, the concept of family relationships which the farm girl gains and has as a background in establishing her own home. The Committee on Family and Parent Education of the White House Conference, in its investigation of 8,000 rural and urban children, discovered poorer adjustment of family relations in the case of the rural child than of the urban child. Furthermore, ill-adjusted home life is generally conceded to be closely related to problem behavior of young people. All studies have shown this. For the country as a whole approximately 50 per cent of delinquent children come from so-called broken homes. Regarding delinquency among farm girls, few data are available. For girls in general, Henriette R. Walter** states, "Little that is conclusive can be found in the way of evidence on the increase or decrease of delinquency among adolescent girls. It is a well-known fact that far fewer girls are brought before the juvenile courts than boys, but apparently for more serious offenses since more of them that do appear are committed than are boys."

Mrs. Honore Willsie Morrow,* in a study of youth made a few years ago, claims to have found frank and open casting off of all old standards of chastity and other restraints among girls and boys

*Annual review of rural life. New York, Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, Information Serv., v. 10, no. 1, 4 p. Jan. 3, 1931.

**Walter, Henriette R. Girl life in America: A study of backgrounds. New York, National Committee for the Study of Juvenile Reading. 1927.

in homes of comfort and privilege; a definite and shocking change for which she holds the parents culpable.

In rural areas, all studies show one of the important problems to be usually that of a lack of adequate social activities for farm youth, especially for farm girls, rather than the city problem of an increasing tendency to live the whole of one's life in the first 20 years. According to studies made by Dr. O. Latham Hatcher, going to church and clubs, visiting, parties, reading, and games form the major leisure-time activities of farm girls as indicated in the following charts:

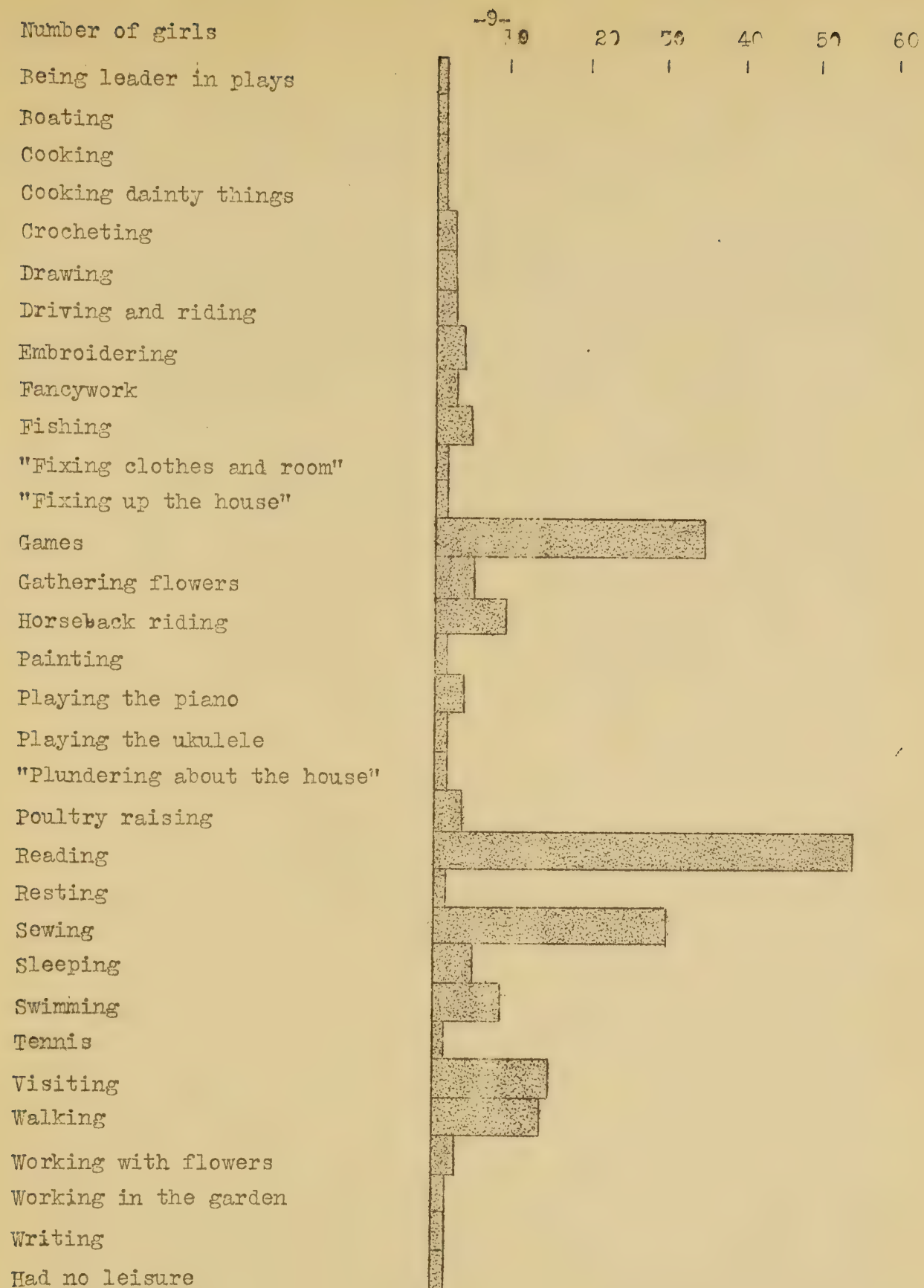


Chart I.
GIRLS' LEISURE INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES IN THE COUNTRY*

*Hatcher, O. L., and others. Rural girls in the city for work: A study made for the Southern woman's educational alliance. 154 p. Richmond, Va., Garrett & Massie. 1930

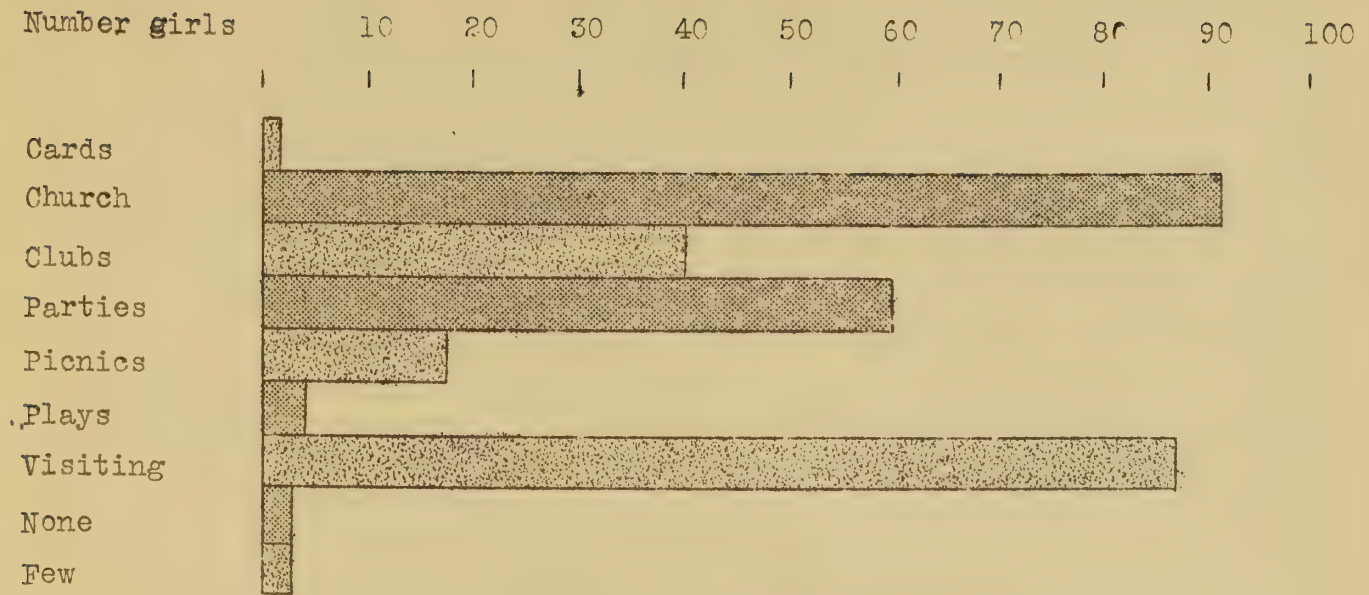


Chart II.
GIRLS' SOCIAL INTERESTS IN THE COUNTRY
(Hatcher, O. L., and others. Rural girls in the city for work.)

These studies are substantiated in the main by the one made in Pennsylvania especially for this conference. You will note that in the foregoing charts, no mention is made of the movies. However, studies in Pennsylvania as well as in other places show that farm girls do attend the movies. The seriousness is not one of frequency, as is often true with city girls, but rather one in relation to the kind or type of movie seen. It is common knowledge that the movie in the small town frequented by the country girl is necessarily cheap and has, usually, the most sensational and harmful pictures portraying the tawdry and false in its picture of life and often marring the emotional and mental development of the growing girl.

Other forms of commercialized recreation which appeal to young girls, and with the increasing number of good roads increasingly to farm girls, are public dances, road houses, and amusement parks, either undesirable in themselves or without adequate supervision, often taking the farm girl far away from family and neighborhood associations. In this connection, in directing farm girls it may be well to point out that with each year of greater urban development the influence of urban mores, as commonly thought of in terms of receptive attitudes toward the church, allurements drawing the girl from the home as a center of social activity, as well as other factors, is becoming correspondingly greater.

In relation to this problem Willis A. Sutton, president of the National Educational Association, says, "The best safeguard of youth of which I know is to so fill the lives of young people with interests which are fine and upbuilding that the trivial and the hurtful can have no appeal for them."

To this end looms the problem of popularizing creative recreation in the home around the family table and on the home grounds; in the community through home-talent plays and pageants, bands and orchestras, as well as through other cooperative community undertakings; developing in a more outstanding way than is now being done those values of farm life, often underestimated and unappreciated, especially by farm girls who have early set their eyes cityward.

Studies made by Miss Henriette R. Walter* indicate that "in families of meager income, girls are called upon to take part in household duties to a considerable extent, and even in those in more comfortable circumstances it is not unusual for the young schoolgirl, or the girl with a job who commutes, to be expected to relieve her mother, when she comes home, from some of the care of the younger children, the family mending, or any of the innumerable duties of the ordinary housewife."

*Walter, Henriette R. Girl life in America: A study of backgrounds. New York, National Committee for the Study of Juvenile Reading. 1927.

Studies by Dr. O. Latham Hatcher are in accordance with the foregoing findings as indicated in the following chart.

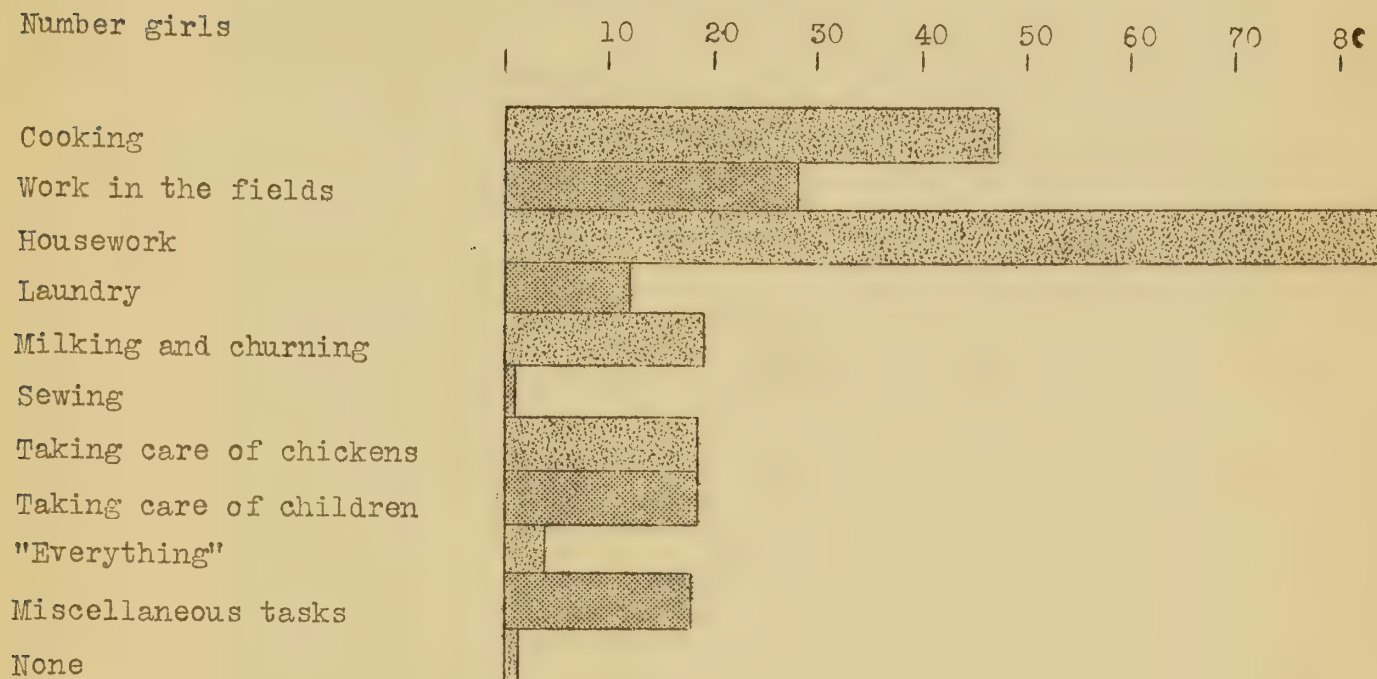


Chart III.
HOME DUTIES OF 100 GIRLS BEFORE THEY CAME TO THE CITY

(Hatcher, O. L., and others. Rural girls in the city for work.)

The fact that such studies as these show that the performance of home duties by girls takes first rank among their activities outside of school time, adds significance to the home-making work of the 4-H clubs as supplementary to that of the schools, for thereby intelligent, constructive direction is given and greater interest and appreciation is developed in the required performance of such routine home duties.

Low incomes may handicap in various ways the development of farm girls as well as city girls, but dangers to the coming generation do not lie alone in homes threatened by poverty. "In most cases where the home failed the child," says the Massachusetts Division of Mental Hygiene of 400 problem children studied in its habit clinics, "it was not through poverty but for spiritual reasons." Four-fifths of those children "failed to get what a normal home gives a child. Eighty-three per cent received no teaching from their parents of what constitutes right or wrong behavior. Ten per cent were unloved or unwanted. Although poverty was not marked in these homes, nearly 50 per cent showed no cultural interests."

Religious
problems

Through the urban trend of country youth, the rural church is losing members, actual and potential, and is suffering through impoverishment and lack of leadership. It has inadequate financial support, is characteristically too small for effective work, and because of the circuit system is lacking in strong leadership. According to the findings of the Institute of Social and Religious Research, 30,808 small communities in the United States, with a population of over 24,000,000, have no resident minister, although about two-thirds of them have churches. These communities form 42.1 per cent of all towns, villages, and hamlets in the country. One-third of the ministers in 179 rural counties in various parts of the United States have other occupations besides the ministry. The majority of rural churches do not have services of worship even once a week. One-third of them do not have Sunday school. According to authoritative statements, of 17,000 country churches of one denomination, 12,000 are without services on any given Sunday. In other words, 5,000 ministers serve 17,000 rural churches. Under the circuit system, some ministers have to serve as many as 8 to 10 churches. Only 10 per cent of the rural pastors of two large denominations have had any college or seminary training. In Ohio, it was found that 60 per cent of the churches in small towns and country are of this small, almost hopeless variety. All rural-church surveys show that country churches are especially weak in their work with girls and boys. However, rural areas claim a larger proportion of Sunday school pupils than do urban areas.



Economic
problems

In farm families, a comparatively low income has probably less relation to an unhappy home atmosphere than is true in city homes. However, too many homes in the country are either unattractive and comfortless or sadly lacking many of the commonly recognized necessary conveniences. In such homes there is little sense of "belongness" or happiness in "sticking around." With "hitch-hiking" becoming common, both girls and boys are being increasingly tempted to spend their leisure elsewhere---away from where they are known and, consequently, usually in an environment where it is easier to yield to harmful temptations. In drab, cheerless homes especially, farm girls have no place that invites either reading or study and certainly no incentive to entertain friends. The result is that in such homes everyone in the family gets on everyone else's nerves, and home life hampers rather than aids the farm girls' best development.

One authority states that in all probability the low income of the farm is the greatest deterrent factor in endangering rural home life. "Bad housing, a poor chance for health, undernourishment, lack of physical resistance, retarded physical development, schooling cut short, divided attention of the mother because she must work as hard as she can to extend the family purse, lack of resources for recreation and for the general enrichment of life---these are the heritage of thousands of low-income families in rural America."

The occupation of the father and his success are chiefly important to farm girls because of what they mean in terms of income and social status, the comfort of the home they make possible, and the opportunities for education, recreation, and cultural advantages.

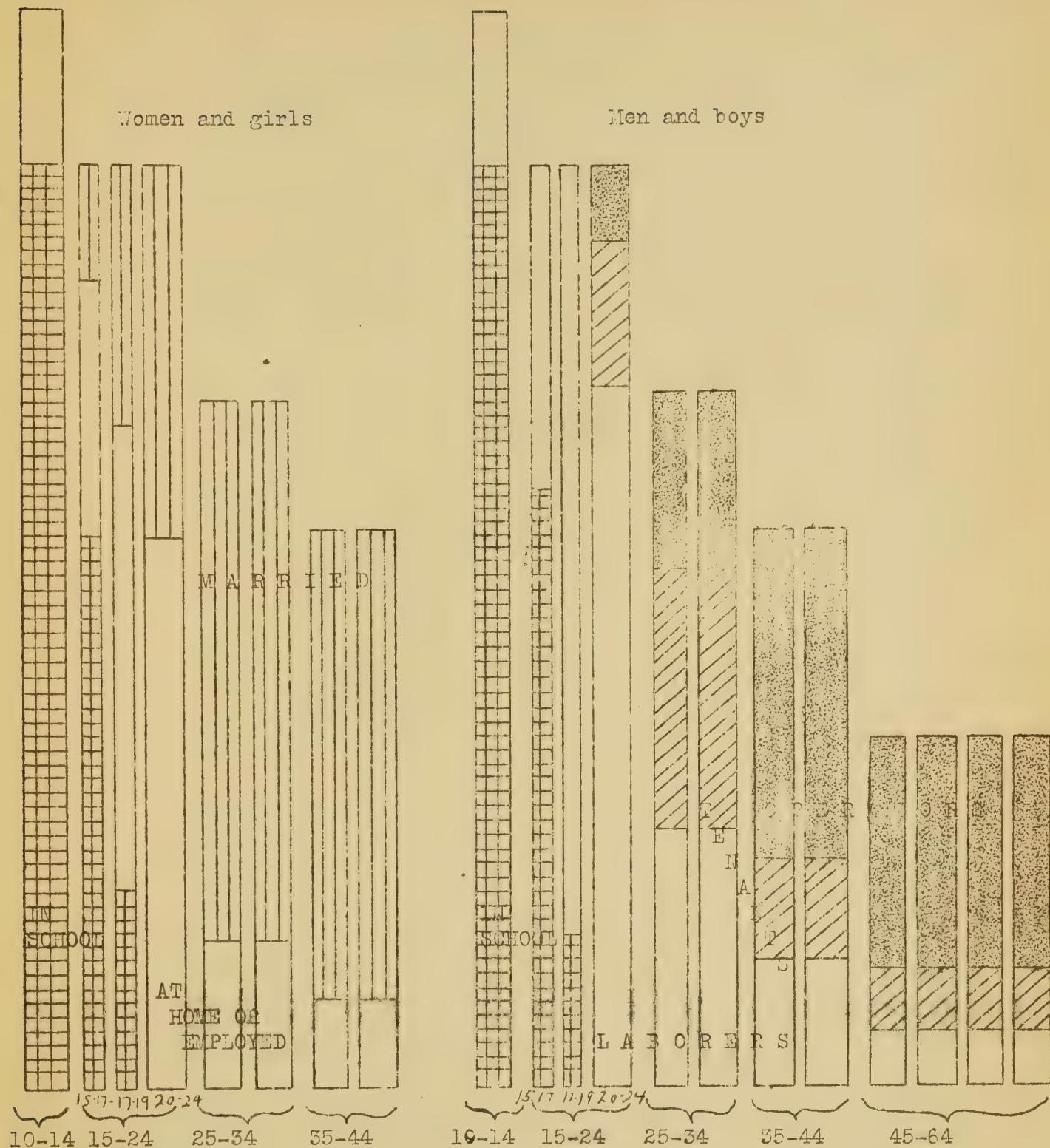


Chart IV.

OCCUPATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF FARM PEOPLE

The accompanying chart shows that more than 50 per cent of our farm girls leave school between the ages of 15 and 17 years. One-third of this number marry soon after, and 85 per cent of all marry later. Assuming that these farm girls marry men four or five years older than they, we find that, for the most part, their husbands, if farmers, will be farm laborers or tenants. Therefore, the major problems of these young married people will be three-fold: First, to make a home; second, to raise a family; third, to accumulate enough to become a tenant, or to acquire a farm or pay a debt.

Fully one-half of the success of this enterprise is dependent upon the young wives of these farmers. At this time, farm girls plunge into their most intensive period of human usefulness. Unfortunately, however, it is often in this same period that the numerous and necessarily unsystematic tasks which make up the day's work of the farm woman with small children, preclude her taking an active part in any work leading to the improvement of home practices. The mother of several young children has comparatively little time for outside activities. It is only the woman without children, or whose children are grown, who in any appreciable way can undertake new enterprises connected with home improvement that require much time. Therefore, it is rather difficult to enlist the active or continuous participation of the young mother as a home demonstrator during this time, important as such participation might be to herself, her home, and her family. Not until she comes to the period of greater leisure are extension workers offered an opportunity to reach her again. In this later period, however, the benefit she derives is given, in turn, more to the community as a leader or trainer of others than to her immediate family.

Consequently, if better home practices are to be established in new rural homes, extension forces must expend their major energies with the farm girl during that period which seems to have been created by nature to enable this "coming home maker" to acquire a great amount of education in a short time. Her very wholesomeness makes everyone willing to instruct and help her. The farm girl, during this formative period, quickly reduces to habit those home practices that must be done day in and day out, and thus her mind is released to attack the new and urgent problems that the young mother and home maker must solve. The causes of unhappiness, and at times even of disaster, in the new home are not due usually to the new problems incident to marriage, but to the routine matters centered in poor bread, unmended clothing, unattractive furnishings, and unorganized households. The very pressing demands upon the energies of the new home maker lessen her vitality and decrease her mental alertness so that she acquires a new habit or adopts a new point of view only at the expense of relatively great effort. Unless good home practices

have been reduced to habit during the adolescent period and the proper attitudes of mind toward the work of the home and changing conditions developed, the farm girl is likely to be handicapped in her home-making activities throughout her life. Intelligent selection and management of a home, determination of an adequate family food supply, care of children, and the economic use of time and effort are a few of the important aspects of work that may be considered advantageously for the farm girl.

Educational
problems

In this relation, it may be of interest to survey the educational opportunities open to the farm girl of to-day. In most cases no other agency outside the home enters so completely into the life of the growing girl as does the school. To a large extent through its influence her interests and future life work, her resources for the enjoyment of leisure, her capacity to meet the emergencies of life are being shaped. Still through the rural school, in spite of the increase in consolidated schools, comparatively little has been done in constructive health activities, recreation, vocational guidance, and attention to individual development.* Only in a few isolated instances has been felt the influence of the results of the philosophy regarding individual differences as measured by mental tests, grading experiments, work of the visiting teacher, the school psychologist, et cetera. Altogether too many rural school teachers still are regarding the human mind as a receptacle into which information can be poured rather "than a living substance which must be set in motion."

So far as the library facilities of rural schools are concerned, we have the following findings:**

"Forty rural schools in Michigan averaged 242 books each, with a maximum between 500 and 600. This high average is accounted for by State aid. The median number of volumes in school libraries of 42 rural counties in Minnesota was 204. 'Rural libraries have very few books on history, geography, and travel that appeal to children. Some libraries are limited largely to fiction for the older pupils.'

"In 3 of 10 Ohio counties, the school superintendents reported that one or more schools in their counties had no library at all.

*Hatcher, O. Latham. Mountain school. 214 p. illus. Richmond, Va., Garrett & Massie, Inc., 1930.

**Walter, Henriette R. Girl life in America: A study of backgrounds. New York, National Committee for the Study of Juvenile Reading, 1927.

"In 39 1-room schools in Illinois, 9 schools had no library books; the average number of books per pupil was 4; and almost one-fifth of the books in these school libraries 'were reported as unsuitable for use in any grade.'

"Thirty-eight of the 48 States made some legal provision for rural school libraries in 1923."

The books in school libraries in one Ohio rural county included:*

	Per cent
English literature (including fiction, poetry, essays, and descriptive prose).....	40
Science.....	17
History and citizenship.....	15
Textbooks.....	11
Geography.....	8
Biography.....	3
Agriculture.....	2
Reference works.....	2
Hygiene, dictionaries, Bible, music, art (each less than).....	1

In 1920, of the 21,000,000 public school children, 10,000,600 were in the open country or small village schools. Of these 70 per cent were in daily attendance as contrasted to 79 per cent in city schools. The average number of days attended per pupil in rural schools during the school year was 96 as contrasted to 143 in city schools. Thus the shorter length of the school year for country children and the lower attendance rate indicate some of the rural educational problems facing those interested in the development of farm youth, particularly farm girls of whom a large proportion are seeking a livelihood in the city in necessary competition with city girls.

*Gray, W. S. Summary of reading investigations (July 1, 1924 to June 30, 1925). The Elementary School Journal, XXVI: 449-459, 507-518, 574-584, 662-673. Feb., March, April, May, 1926.

THE FOLLOWING CHART INDICATES THE AGES AT WHICH 95 FARM GIRLS
IN NORTH CAROLINA AND VIRGINIA LEFT SCHOOL

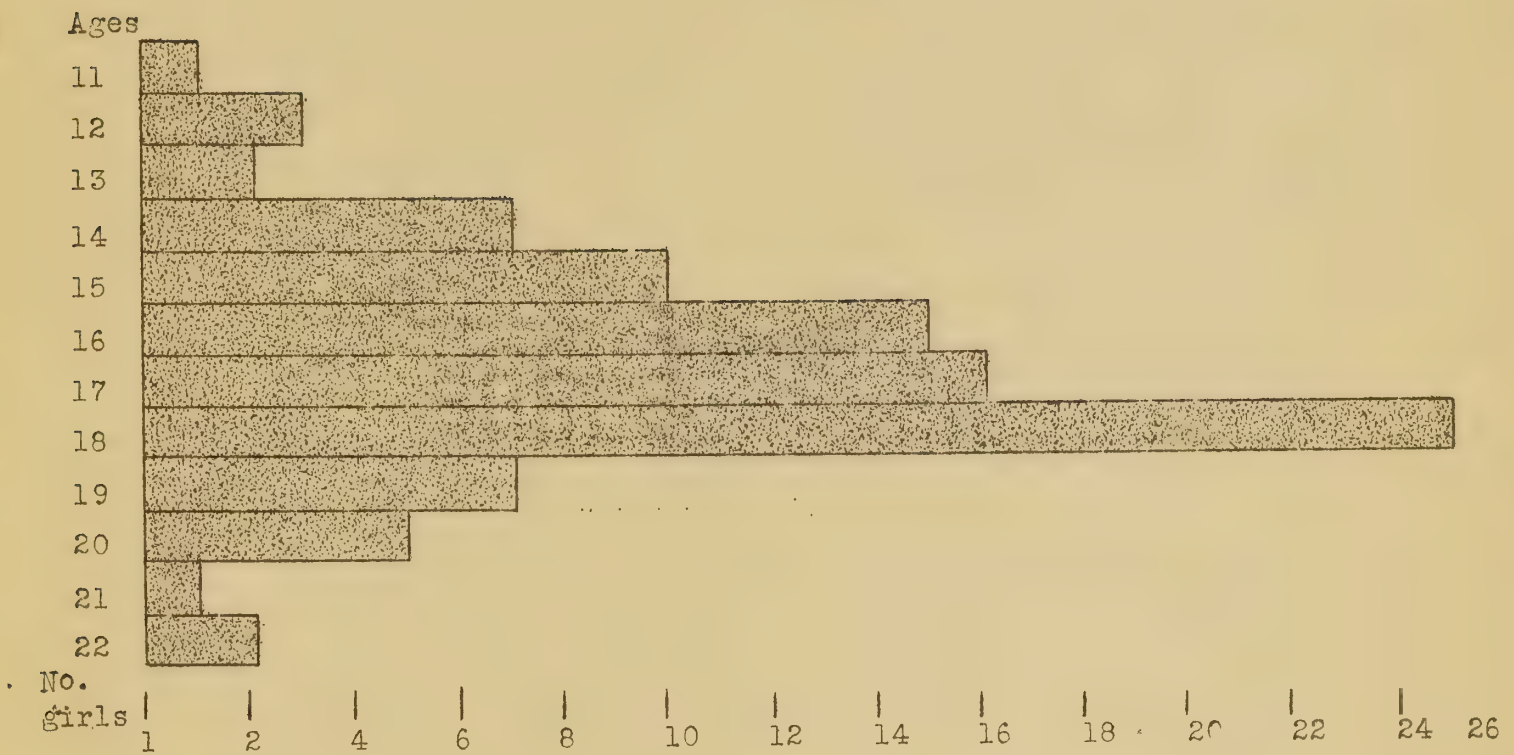


Chart V.

AGES AT WHICH 95 FARM GIRLS LEFT SCHOOL

(Hatcher, O. L., and others. Rural girls in the city for work.)

THE ACCOMPANYING CHART INDICATES THE REASONS OF 230 FARM GIRLS IN
NORTH CAROLINA AND VIRGINIA FOR LEAVING SCHOOL

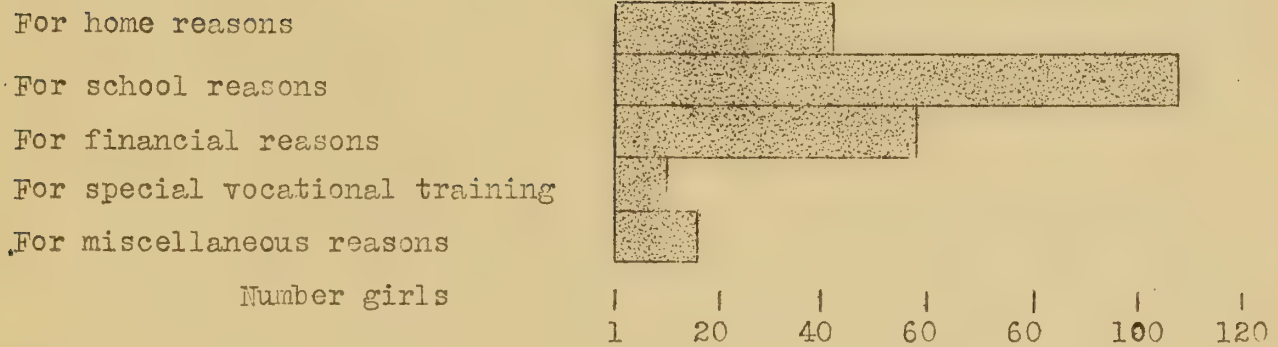


Chart VI.

230 FARM GIRLS' REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL

(Hatcher, O. L., and others. Rural girls in the city for work.)

The problems of foreign-born farm girls are even greater. For one thing illiteracy is twice as prevalent in their families as in those of their American-born sisters. Added to this handicap are those of lower family incomes, tendency of foreign mothers to work in the fields, and change of environment due to transplanting individuals from European to American soil.

The still large number of 1-room schools (161,000 in 1930*), long distances to be traveled to school, untrained teachers, the call for children for farm work, a restricted curriculum, and limited school facilities are all factors in poor school attendance and short terms in rural areas. Is it any wonder then that illiteracy is nearly twice as high in rural as in urban areas? Nor is it any wonder that there is a high percentage of retardation in rural schools?

In a Cleveland study reported by Dr. Bonser of Teachers College, Columbia University, it was found that in general the retarded group was more active manually and socially than the accelerated group and that their reading followed such interests. Experience with rural girls and boys tends to confirm the belief that such results obtain for them also.

In relation to retardation, the following table gives a comparison of the percentages for the country as a whole with those found by the National Child Labor Committee in 1923 in the Ohio onion fields, where child labor is commonly recognized. The same results probably hold true in the East where child labor in the fields is prevalent.

<u>Group</u>	<u>U. S. as a whole</u>	<u>Ohio onion fields</u>
Retarded	22.4	44.1
Normal	65.65	52.5
Accelerated	11.9	3.3

Statistics issued by the United States Bureau of Education indicate that girls have a lower percentage of retardation than boys. Opportunity for vocational guidance or training for girls, although less than for boys, in cities is of course far beyond anything that is offered rural girls. Here again the farm girl is handicapped in going to the city to earn her living alongside the city girl.

*Preliminary committee reports of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection. Century Co. 1930.



Vocational
problems

In relation to the farm girl's vocational problems, the seriousness with which a farm girl considers her future may be gauged by whether or not she begins planning for it in advance and tries to find out what the possibilities are for her. It is a matter of common knowledge that from the early years of childhood there flit constantly through the mind of the growing girl and boy snatchy pictures of what the future holds for them. These take more definite shape as the years roll by. In the early years of adolescence the farm girl is busy in school or at household tasks under parental supervision, making constantly simple choices and, perhaps, wondering, more than her parents realize, as to what she will do in the years immediately ahead. Will she finish school and go to college? If so, what college? Will she quit school now and help mother at home, or go to work? If work is the choice, what kind of work, and where? And after that, what? Marriage? If so, what kind of a man will help her most in building a happy, successful home? If she is to marry a farmer, what about her philosophy of rural life? Will it be an asset or a liability in helping her to make a satisfying home in the country? What about the size of the farm to be chosen as their first adventure? Does she know anything of its relation to profits? What about the choice of insurance to be carried, establishing a savings account as well as credit, keeping a record of property owned, planning a practical budget, and paying one's own way? What does the present typical farm girl know of the technique useful in determining the type of farming best suited to the locality and the size of a farm sufficient to support a family; the proper amount of rent to pay, or the price to offer in buying a farm; or the proper amount of indebtedness to assume as well as the proper method of financing the transaction? Then there is the furniture and equipment to be bought; allotments to be made for different family expenditures in relation to the farm receipts, and, perhaps, most important of all, the development of a plan for a satisfying family life. Does the present typical farm girl have very much of an idea of the art of family living? In this relation John D. Willard* says:

"A training that does not include adequate cultural development is just as deficient as the one that does not include adequate technical training. But if you must neglect one for the other, neglect the technical so far as may be necessary to insure a well-rounded personality and a well-disciplined mind which will keep on growing in technical wisdom long after school days are over."

*Willard, John D. Home economics teaching in the field of rural adult education. Jour. of Home Econ., v. 22:2:85-89. Feb., 1930.

Because of the work in vocational training and guidance in city schools, there is probably more real, directed thought and effort along this line among city girls than rural girls. One of the most difficult phases in the life of all adolescent girls is the passage from the semiprotection of school and home to the independence of the working girl. Girls, although they tend to remain in school longer than boys, are faced to-day with more confused thinking as to their future course than are boys, due largely to the fact that girls now are being confronted with more choices to make than those of any other generation.

According to Dr. O. Latham Hatcher,* president of the Southern Woman's Educational Alliance, the typical needs of girls for educational and vocational guidance include "clear, convincing interpretations of the general value and of the different values in education, as related to general life satisfactions, to self-development, and to money getting through work. The same sort of interpretation to their parents, so as to induce fuller parental understanding and cooperation, is often crucially needed as providing the key to the child's whole educational problem. They need appraisal of their individual levels of intelligence and educational achievements, on the basis of mental and educational tests and other available aids for advising them about the amount and kind of further education to seek. They need informed and thoroughly judicial guidance in selecting the higher institutions which they should attend, and very often, of course, help in making connections, in budgeting expense, in getting scholarships, loans and self-help work, et cetera. They need information and guidance in choosing the best place for further study or experience when college proves inadvisable. They need understanding of their individual interests and help in gratifying legitimate ones in their activities, for instance, encouragement in the development of a cultural or vocational interest in art, in music, or in reading, and in other interests enriching life and personality and making for better-balanced living. They need help in solving home problems which interfere with education, whether affecting school attendance or otherwise hindering personal development, such as home chores, lack of parental sympathy with aspirations, et cetera."

In particular reference to rural girls, Dr. Hatcher includes in their needs for vocational information and guidance:

*Hatcher, O. L. Economic problems of the farm girl. Paper presented by Dr. Hatcher at National 4-H Club Camp, Washington, D. C., June 19, 1930. Not published.

"About ways of earning spending money or pin money in the country.

About a variety of agricultural occupations from which they might wisely choose.

About nonagricultural occupations which can be followed in the country.

About how to get special talents in art, music, dancing, etc. appraised before deciding to prepare to use them professionally.

There is much art hunger among rural young people and a need of double caution in advising them, because the difficulty involved in their securing the right training is far greater as a rule than for girls and boys in the city.

About whether to go to the city.

About conditions to be expected if they go---as regards city occupations open to the unskilled, wages, working hours, environment for city work, seasonal and temporary factors in employment and unemployment, living costs and conditions, recreation.

About city occupations on the higher levels, training required, salaries, chances for advance, etc.

Expert counseling helping them to adjust to city conditions. Information about and adjustment to right rural or city occupations for boys or girls who can not profit longer by remaining in school."

It is of particular interest, in view of what is being done in vocational guidance in the city schools, to note the little work that is being done in rural areas.

George Russell* (commonly known as AE.) urged upon the American people when he was in this country a few months ago, in the interests of national well-being, to lessen this rush of rural youths to the city and to think of building up a rural civilization; something which the world has never yet seen. In concluding one of his talks he made the statement that it will need the "highest political genius to so organize the rural community that something of the culture and prosperity of so great a state will be reflected in the men in the villages and fields." If his philosophy is sound, then it is our responsibility to help more rural girls to make an adequate living in the country rather than to let so many of them drift aimlessly to the city. In this regard, Prof. W. F. Kumlien in a recent study of the high-school education of farm girls and boys in South Dakota** shows that slightly more than one-half of the farm girls

*Russell, George. Building a rural civilization. Rural America 8:9:15-16. Nov., 1930.

**Kumlien, W. F. The high school education of farm boys and girls in South Dakota. 62 p. illus. March, 1930. S. Dak. Agr. Expt. Sta. Bul. 250.

and boys of high school age in South Dakota are now enrolled in high schools and that it is estimated that less than one-third of the general run of farm girls and boys attending high school return to the farm after finishing their high-school courses. The study also shows that of those taking vocational agriculture, 60 to 70 per cent return to the farm.

If farm girls are to be encouraged to earn an adequate living on the farm, then it is fundamental that they as well as farm boys be taught all those essentials that will make them alert and successful. Some of these essentials include becoming skillful in the technique of detecting trends and being able to adjust one's thinking and work in keeping with such trends. As recently pointed out by Dr. C. W. Warburton,* the young people of to-day, who man the farms of to-morrow, must reckon with the increased efficiency of the producer, due to the use of power and improved machinery; the increase in production of meat and milk per unit of feed consumed; the demand for a higher standard of living on the part of all members of the farm family; the rapid production and population shifts over large areas; and the increased control of marketing functions by producers. The farm girl as well as the farm boy, in addition to reckoning with these trends, must take into account declining price levels of farm products, decreased purchasing power, continued relatively high prices of retail goods, great surpluses in basic agricultural commodities, and the general decline in birth rate with its consequent slowing up of increase in population and consumption as factors of importance in any plan of farming which they may follow.

The question often arises as to what 4-H club members actually do after passing through a few years of club work, in which have been caught some glimpses of a full and enriched life in the country. To answer this question, a limited study of what former club girls are doing was made by Mrs. Harriet Johnson, girls' club leader of South Carolina. A summary made from reports of home demonstration agents in 22 counties regarding 187 former club girls, shows the wide fields of interest into which these girls have entered. Sixty-six of the group are preparing for future work. Of these:

*Warburton, C. W. Agricultural extension as affected by recent economic trends. 8 p. Dec., 1930. U. S. Dept. Agr., Ext. Serv. Circ. 140. Min.

51 are in college.
8 are training to be nurses.
2 are training for business positions.
4 are training to be home-economics teachers.
1 is still in high school.

Thirty-seven are engaged in nine professional or business occupations. These include:

20 teaching.
6 in business offices.
4 nursing.
2 saleswomen.
1 commercial demonstrator.
1 in cafeteria.
1 in charge of post office.
1 in textile mill.
1 in a county health office.

Of the 20 teaching, data received show:

4 home-economics teachers.
1 music teacher.
2 volunteer club leaders.
9 rural teachers.
2 principals.
2 town teachers.

Twenty-six are remaining in their home communities. Of these 10 are not married, but helping with home and community life.

Of the 16 who are married:

13 are farmers' wives.
(Two of the farmers do other work, one on the highway and one a truck driver part time.)
12 couples are living in the country.
4 couples are living in villages.
6 live in husband's community.
~~6 live in wife's community.~~
1 is wife of a marine.
1 is wife of a truck driver.
9 couples own their homes.
6 couples rent their houses.
3 couples live with relatives.
13 keep house alone.
9 of the wives are mothers.
6 are mothers of one child.
3 are mothers of two children.

- 0 work outside of the home.
- (1 sells home products.)
- 7 belong to home demonstration clubs.

These girls were enrolled in club work some time between 1921 and 1930 with an average of 3.7 years for 132 of them. This study was too limited to portray very much, but the following facts are of special interest:

The average number of years spent in club work by the girls studied is higher by about a year than the average found over the United States, nearly four years being the average of the 187 girls included in the study.

Of those married:

1. Over 50 per cent own their homes and 81 per cent are keeping house alone.
2. All are devoting their entire time to the home, not being engaged in gainful employment out of the home.
3. Over 80 per cent married farmers and are living in their own communities.

Another study was made during the past year in Brown County, Ind., to show what has become of the young folks and what they are doing. In this study a list of all boys as well as girls in the county in 1923, between the ages of 14 and 16, inclusive, was made. This list consisted of 409 names, divided into groups according to the school district in which they lived. An attempt was then made to find out what had become of them after seven years. In 1930 these boys and girls would be 21, 22, and 23 years of age, if they were still living. Of the 409 in the county in 1923, 269 had moved away, 6 were dead, and 134 were still in the county.

The fact that we have Federal and State appropriations for 4-H club work raises the question of our responsibility to the farm girl who goes to the city to earn a living. Do we owe it to the city, where are contributed taxes for our work, to equip her as best we can for her chosen work? What responsibility is ours for the crises which farm girls often have to meet in the city in the form of health difficulties, such as accidents; mental and emotional difficulties, such as depression or hysterics due

to nervousness in adjusting one's self to a totally new environment; family difficulties, such as misunderstandings regarding amount of money to be sent home, or frequency of letters home, or homesickness and longing to return home; difficulties with young men, often chance acquaintances; difficulties in finding a suitable place in which to stay; financial difficulties, in attempting to live in the city on a limited wage; difficulties with employer and worry over possible lack of work? All these threaten any farm girl going to the city. A large number are going each year. What is our responsibility?

Inquiries are constantly being made as to what farm girls do in the city. The following gives an indication:

Industrial workers

Sales girls and nonclerical store jobs

Clerical workers and business students

Nurses in training

Waitresses

Number of girls

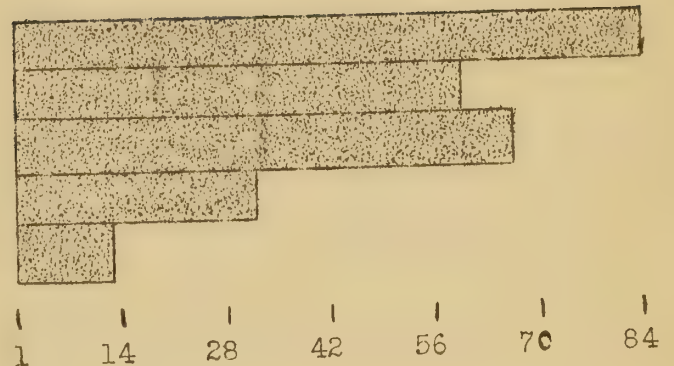


Chart VII.

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF 255 FARM GIRLS IN THE CITY

(Hatcher, O. L., and others. Rural girls in the city for work.)

The foregoing chart is of special interest when compared to the one based on the previously described study by Mrs. Johnson, in regard to what 124 former 4-H club girls were found to be doing.

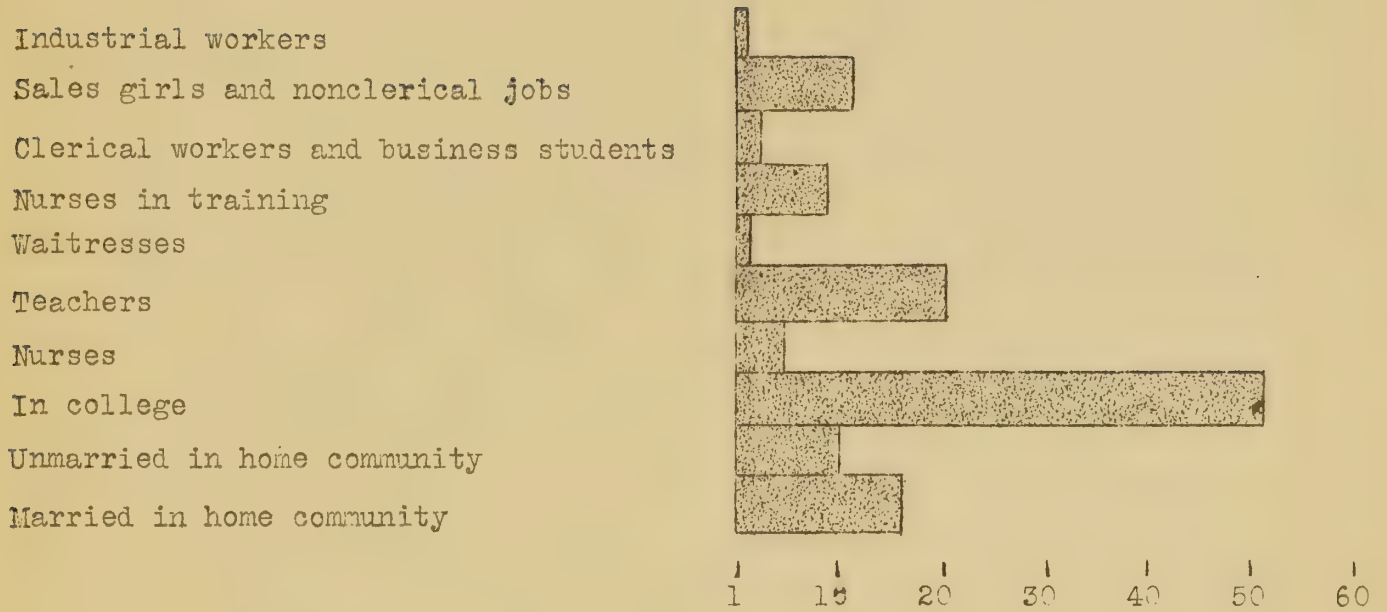


Chart VIII.

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF 124 FOMLER 4-H CLUB GIRLS

Educators are sometimes criticised for allowing farm youth to aim too high. The disillusionments that often follow from such undirected or misdirected yearnings are many times the cause of tragic experiences on the part of farm girls alone in the strange, cold environment of the city to which they have come to earn their living. In this relation, the following data are of particular interest, in which Dr. Hatcher* shows the past vocational plans or desires and present occupations of 100 country girls who came to the city to earn their living.

Past Vocational Plans or Desires and Present Occupations
of 100 Girls in the City

Past vocational plan or desire in country	: Number of girls	: Present occupation of same girl in city	: Number of girls
Artist.....	3	: Business-school student	1
		: Stenographer.....	2
Beauty-parlor worker..	1	: Waitress.....	1
Concert singer.....	1	: Hosiery-mill worker.....	1
Factory worker.....	1	: Factory worker.....	1
Home economics.....	2	: Assistant manager in	
		: cafeteria.....	1
		: Nurse.....	1
Lawyer.....	1	: Nurse.....	1
Mill worker.....	1	: Hosiery-mill worker.....	1
Missionary (foreign)...	1	: Nurse.....	1
Missionary (home).....	1	: Sales girl.....	1
Nurse.....	17	: Business-school student..	2
		: Envelope-company worker..	1
		: Hosiery-mill worker.....	2
		: Nurse.....	6
		: Sales girl.....	1
		: Tobacco-factory worker..	2
		: Typist.....	1
		: Waitress.....	2
Office worker.....	2	: Cashier.....	1
		: Stenographer.....	1
Poet.....	1	: Business-school student..	1
Sales girl.....	4	: Sales girl.....	3
		: Assistant buyer.....	1
Stenographer.....	13	: Adjustment clerk.....	1
		: Business-school student..	4
		: Hosiery-mill worker.....	1

*Hatcher, O. L., and others, Rural girls in the city for work:
A study made for the Southern woman's educational alliance.
154 p. Richmond, Va., Garrett & Massie, 1930.

Past vocational plan or desire in country	:	Number of: girls	:	Present occupation of same girl in city	:	Number of girls
	:		:		:	
	:		:	Office worker.....	:	1
	:		:	Sales girl.....	:	2
	:		:	Stenographer.....	:	4
Teachers (unspecified)...	:	24	:	Business-school student...	:	3
	:		:	Office worker.....	:	3
	:		:	Hosiery-mill worker.....	:	2
	:		:	Nurse.....	:	2
	:		:	Telephone operator.....	:	1
	:		:	Sales girl.....	:	5
	:		:	Stenographer.....	:	3
	:		:	Stock girl.....	:	2
	:		:	Tobacco-factory worker...	:	3
Teacher of domestic science.....	:	1	:	Librarian.....	:	1
Teacher of dramatics.....	:	1	:	Nurse.....	:	1
Teacher of history.....	:	2	:	Business-school student...	:	1
	:		:	Hosiery-mill worker.....	:	1
Teacher of mathematics...	:	1	:	Business-school student...	:	1
Teacher of music.....	:	2	:	Office worker.....	:	1
	:		:	Tobacco factory worker...	:	1
Teacher of voice.....	:	1	:	Nurse.....	:	1
Telephone operator.....	:	1	:	Waitress.....	:	1
"To sew".....	:	1	:	Alterer.....	:	1
"To travel".....	:	1	:	Telephone operator.....	:	1
"Never thought".....	:	12	:	Bookbinder.....	:	1
	:		:	Clerical worker.....	:	1
	:		:	Hosiery-mill worker.....	:	1
	:		:	Lost-and-found desk clerk:	:	1
	:		:	Tobacco-factory worker...	:	5
	:		:	Waitress.....	:	3
"Not any".....	:	4	:	Hosiery-mill worker.....	:	1
	:		:	Sales girl.....	:	2
	:		:	Stenographer.....	:	1
Total.....: 100			:	Total.....: 100		

To develop the farm girl's best self is the challenge facing every leader of rural youth. They, like their city sisters, may be criticised for their surface behavior; as perhaps observed in their apparent lack of appreciation of the values in the open country and their often-expressed desire to be a part of the city rush. However, to know of what farm girls are seriously thinking one must have their confidence, as was gained with a group of high-school students who worked out the following so-called five fundamental desires:

- Desire for good health.
- Desire for success in a worthy occupation.
- Desire for a good home.
- Desire for wholesome recreation.
- Desire to be of service to one's fellow beings.

It is safe to assume that the very large majority of farm youth is in accord with the above. However, we must bear in mind that the ideals of young people take "body and color" from the ideals of adults. To hold our national ideals, farm youth of to-day must be guided in accordance with the principles of a philosophy of rural life that will develop those ideals. If men and women are now so guided, we may logically assume that young people will develop those same ideals, making them, in turn, intellectually and morally fit as adults, capable of using their power and freedom in the right way. Surely no group of youth is more sympathetically inclined in this regard than the farm girls that can be reached through our 4-H club work. What they ultimately do will be at least in some measure a reflection of our own philosophy and influence as leaders upon them.

